

At Focus: Romania

„We fight with the government and the employers for maintaining the present labour legislation and collective agreements at branches levels“

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Questions for the colleague Vasile Badica about the results of the crisis for the polish wood and furniture industry and about trade union fields of activity?

➤ **Since 2009, the global economic and financial crisis has also significantly influenced the wood and furniture industry. Which were the economic results had the crisis on the enterprises and the sector in your country and what are the current developments?**

At Romanian wood industry level, the economical and financial crisis affected in a different way the sector of primary wood processing, comparing with the furniture industry.

In 2009, in the sector of primary wood processing we had an increase with 18% at industrial production, with 33,7% at work productivity, but the export decreased with 3%.

In the furniture industry we have significant decreases, with 14,5% at industrial production, 11,2% at export, but the labour productivity increased with 17,9%.

➤ **What are the results of the economic crisis on the employment in the sector? What are the negative trends – for example for jobs, working hours, salaries and the work standards in the enterprises?**

The worse were affected the work places.

In 2009, 42.000 employees were fired, comparing with 2008: 22.000 from furniture industry and 20.000 from primary processing.

The incomes from salary decreased in 2009 comparing with 2008 with 9,7% in furniture industry and with 11,7% 11,7%. Many companies reduced the working hours, according with the orders and the employees stayed at home without payment. Exception was made by a few employers, which paid 75% from salary.



Vasile Badica is president of the trade union F.S.L.I.L. (Federatia Sindicatelor Libere din Industria Lemnului Romania

➤ **How have the trade unions handled the crisis? What were your instruments and strategies to protect jobs and employees? How successful were you?**

Very hard. We had a hard time from our government part; they didn't increase the minim wage on economy at national level. They preferred the lay offs and didn't support the employers, through exemption from taxation of employees' salaries in technical unemployment. The trade unions instruments are without significance, since the social dialogue with the government didn't worked a long period of time and our proposal were not take into consideration. We took part in several protest's actions, pickets, protest meetings and marches, in order to present our propositions to employees' protection. **We had less than a little success.**

➤ **What should be the further activities of trade unions to support the interests of employees (like secure jobs, good labour standards and wage agreement salaries) even under crisis conditions? What are your approaches on company and sector level?**

In Romania, the employers had and still have facilities obtained also with the trade unions support, but they used these facilities only for their own purposes. See the disastrous decrease of employees' number and of salaries and, at the same time, the industrial production and the labour productivity increase all over wood industry. We fight with the government and the employers for maintaining the present labour legislation, Labour Code and collective agreements at branches levels. It is a European current which want the labour "flexibility". On our understanding, that means that **the lay offs are at employers' disposal.**

➤ **The European and international competition in the wood and furniture sector will remain significant in the future even after the crisis. Many companies have to improve their products**

and qualities. What is the importance of vocational further training of the employees in this context?

The European and international competition in wood industry remains significant. Each company must improve the quality of products and prices' correction. The report quality-price will be determinant. In order to obtain these parameters, a special accent must be put on continuous vocational training. From trade unions and employers part it exist a preoccupation for CVT and qualification/re-qualification.

➡ How far is qualification a topic of your company and sector activities today? What has improved, where are still deficits?

At wood industry level, FSLIL together with the employers associations have several project on qualification/re-qualification and counselling, financed by European Commission, Romanian Government and FSLIL. In this field we have a slight improvement; we have many unskilled workers and most of them are young.

➡ Do you have trade union or company-based initiatives for a systematic and improved further training for employees of wood/furniture sector?

We have trade union initiatives at national and companies' levels. At branch level, we organised the Sectorial committee for vocational training of adults, which functions based on employers-trade unions bipartite principle and approaches also other aspects of wood industry.

➡ What do you expect from the European Cooperation in the project INNO2? What results do you expect in the context of further training?

We have great expectations related the cooperation at European level, especially with the countries partners in INNO2 project. The change of information among partners and the proposals of activities improvement by INNO2 partners will be all the time an example of implementation of acquired best practices. In the frame of continuous vocational training we are expecting the project's continuation or a new project on CVT theme. From our projects at national level, we are expecting the qualification/re-qualification of 720 persons and the counselling of 2600 persons..

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